

# September

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*A NaNoWriMo novel.*

# Julius

Julius was a child prodigy. Not just a master of things an older child should achieve, but the proud owner of a powerful and perceptive mind. He was the youngest child in a large but poor family living in a somewhat dilapidated council house, right in the middle of nowhere.

He would never have learned of the term “sink estate” if he hadn’t been able to use his library and the computers laid out in a row. Aged only eight, he was already beginning to form quite definite opinions about the world around him, the politics of the times and whether staying put was in his best interests. It struck him that he had been born some hundred years too late. There were few opportunities for him to grasp and precious little chance of his ever reaching a school that would really develop him to his fullest potential.

Julius was, in short, special.

And special people are given to remarkable plans.

Julius was a pupil at Dean Road Primary School. His uniform, handed down from elder brothers, was a bright red pullover and grey trousers. He had the run of the school library, having established early in his Junior years that he was quite capable of defeating even the most complex reading scheme materials.

Julius liked the library. It smelled old and warm and slightly of the damp that spread in a patch on the carpet under the skylight. Having devoured the maths curriculum with the same appetite he had found for English, he was excused regular lessons on the basis that most teachers were unsure how to deal with him and he was at least extending his education if he was in the library.

Halfway across the room was a notional divide, marked with a break in the lines of bookcases, between those books appropriate for borrowing and those which could not be removed. Bright yellow stickers on this second group reinforced the message - learning was not to be distributed among the common people. Education beyond the basic standards required was a commodity with value, and deserved protection. These books were interesting. Julius had read a great number of them, assimilating the information they set out before him and adding it to the things he already knew. He also read the Times Educational Supplement when it was left lying around in the school reception, and occasionally the headteacher would be out and his copy of the Telegraph would be left lying in the corridor, poking forlornly from his pigeon hole.

The headteacher, Mr Morris, was approaching retirement and completely unfazed by the apparent ascendancy of the young man in Year 3. He had made a profitable and comfortable career by reacting slowly and with much forethought. The child was bright and had a good memory. Good. This would turn out well for the child, and the

school, when young Julius was applying to senior schools and Mr Morris' own reputation would be dealt a fair hand into the bargain. Star pupils were there to shine and in their light, Dean Road would bask in reflected glory.

One area of the library saw little attention from Julius. He had very slight regard for fiction. Aged eight he was aware of the mechanics of reproduction but had no concern for the emotional aspects of relationships. Being able to read well above his age, he had sampled a selection of teen fiction and decided that romance was either beneath or beyond him. Fairy tales were for children and he was confident he could skip past that particular stage on the route to adulthood. Spy stories were unrealistic, adventure tales seemed contrived, and he had absolutely no time for any tale involving horses whether real or imaginary.

Had Julius read a little more carefully into the fairy tales and folk myths which were laid out in plain sight, he may have reacted differently to the next big development in his life. As it was, he was woefully unprepared for the consequences.